

rather sparse, though Virginia creeper (Parthenocissus quinquefolia) is common. The classification of such a forest, which is actually fairly common near the coast, is not well treated in Schafale and Weakley (1985); it probably represents a seral stage or disturbance phase of a maritime forest community.

OWNERSHIP: Private

PROTECTION STATUS: None

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT OR PROTECTION: The natural area has a number of potential threats. It needs protection from ditching for drainage of the adjacent woodlands. It needs protection from dredge and fill operations for the construction of shoreline access and boat channels from the uplands. The uplands need protection from further clearing for agriculture or for vacation home development. Also, the marshes need to be burned every few years to maintain plant species diversity. It is hoped that these marshes and adjacent uplands can be acquired by a State or Federal agency, as a part of a larger complex of North River/Albemarle Sound preserves, especially for the protection of the slightly brackish marshes.

COMMENTS: The "taxonomy" of some of the mainland forests adjacent to estuarine habitats needs considerable attention. There are many rather mature forests that are dominated by loblolly pine, with hardwoods such as sweetgum, in coastal sites such as mainland Currituck County or on Roanoke Island in Dare County that do not appear to fit well into the Classification of the Natural Communities of North Carolina (Schafale and Weakley 1985). The third approximation of this classification (in prep.; Mike Schafale, pers. comm.) also does not seem to classify such mixed pine/hardwood forests. At maturity, the pines would presumably be replaced by sweetgum, red maple, and perhaps several oak species; however, such forests generally have some "maritime" plants present, such as wild olive (Osmanthus americana), yaupon, or live oak. The third approximation does include a Coastal Fringe Evergreen Forest natural community, and portions of the forests at Harbinger can apparently be considered as this community, though the presence of sweetgum as a dominant implies either disturbance or a somewhat wetter site than is typical for most sites of this natural community. At any rate, the original maritime forests, Coastal Fringe Loblolly Pine Forests, and Pine Flatwoods in mainland Currituck County have only partially recovered from 250 years of grazing, logging, and agriculture.

There is a good potential for the marshes to contain rare plant species. Winged seedbox (Ludwigia alata) and twig-rush (Cladium mariscoides) are present in similar marshes and might well be present in these, as well.

REFERENCES: Frost (1989n)